

Franco-British War and averting conflict with Great Britain through Jay's Treaty in 1794, he also demonstrated the President's ability to lead in matters of foreign policy.

In 1796, as his second term in office came to an end, President Washington urged the American people to cherish the Union. He reminded his listeners that the principles upon which our Nation was founded are rooted in faith, and he encouraged them to promote public virtue and the general diffusion of knowledge as means of preserving those ideals. "You have," he declared, "in a common cause fought and triumphed together." Washington hoped that the American people would always be united by their love for liberty and self-government.

Today we know that Washington's efforts were not made in vain. "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." These were the immortal words given in eulogy to George Washington shortly after his death in 1799. They are a fitting tribute to a great American patriot and President.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby urge all Americans to observe the 258th anniversary of the birth of George Washington with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities designed to honor the memory of this great American.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6098 of February 16, 1990

Lithuanian Independence Day, 1990

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The birth of a nation is a momentous event that inscribes a people's name forever in the annals of history, motivating and inspiring those who live under its banner and ideals. Seventy-two years ago, on February 16, 1918, the people of Lithuania realized their long-denied dream of independence. The free Republic of Lithuania prospered until the tragic events of 1940—when Soviet troops invaded and occupied the country as a result of the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed just 1 year before.

Lithuania's struggle for liberty, and that of its neighbors in Estonia and Latvia, served as an inspiration to many who saw the collapse of old empires as a harbinger of peace and freedom for Europe. Later, when these heartfelt aspirations were crushed by totalitarian aggression, freedom-loving men and women around the world were rightfully outraged.

The ongoing Baltic dilemma remains an unresolved legacy of the Stalin era. However, the democratic reawakening in Lithuania offers hope that popular aspirations for political, economic, and social justice will be realized.

The brave men and women of Lithuania began to pursue just and noble goals on the 16th of February, 1918. We reaffirm our support and admiration for the Lithuanian people as we recall the significance of that date today—the 72nd anniversary of Lithuanian independence.

In recognition of the aspirations of freedom-loving people in all nations, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 149, has designated February 16, 1990, as “Lithuanian Independence Day” and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim February 16, 1990, as Lithuanian Independence Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities in reaffirmation of their devotion to the principles of democracy and freedom throughout the world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Editorial note: For the statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on Lithuanian independence, dated Mar. 11, 1990, see the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 26, pp. 401, 444, 485).

Proclamation 6099 of February 21, 1990

Save Your Vision Week, 1990

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

The loss of the precious gift of sight—at any age—is always tragic, but even more so when it could have been prevented.

Certain eye disorders in young children can interfere with the development of normal vision. Some of these problems are difficult to detect and may go unnoticed until they have caused significant, perhaps even permanent, damage. Therefore, it is essential that parents have their children’s vision checked at or before age 3. The early discovery and prompt treatment of an eye problem can prevent visual loss that might otherwise be irreparable by the time a child reaches school age.

In adulthood, the estimated 11 million Americans who have diabetes are vulnerable to a potentially blinding eye disease known as diabetic retinopathy. People with diabetes often develop this condition, in which weakened blood vessels in the eye can cause severe vision loss